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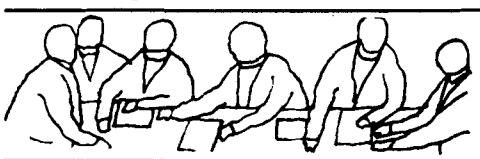
RICHARD STITH

A Secular Case Against Abortion on Demand



BISHOPS' NON-AGENDA

JOHN OVERBROOK

THE EXILE OF PIRATES & PRINCES

TOM S. RECK

ALBERT R. DiIANNI **THE AMERICANIZATION OF SEX**
RONALD CHRIST **THREE TRAPPED TIGERS BETRAYED BY RITA HAYWORTH**
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MAISIE WARD **MUGGERIDGE ON MOTHER TERESA**
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NEWS & VIEWS

Harnessing the A.E.C.

The Atomic Energy Commission's declaration that it is shifting its role from promoting nuclear energy to protecting the public interest in nuclear affairs is most welcome, but the A.E.C. still has a skeptical public on its hands. A.E.C. credibility is such that it's going to take much more than ringing professions of intent to dispel the idea that the A.E.C. is engaged in another devious gesture aimed at defusing concern over the proliferation of commercial nuclear programs.

The Scientists' Institute for Public Information (SIPI) is one of those harboring suspicions. Coincidental with the A.E.C.'s announcement of its policy shift, the SIPI released a statement accusing the A.E.C. of being "superficial" and "misleading" in its evaluations of the Liquid Metal Fast Breeder Reactor (LMFBR), the generator for commercial nuclear power.

The A.E.C. was accused of concerning itself with only the first of many, many commercial breeders that are to be produced, and of failing to produce an environmental impact statement for the entire LMFBR program, as legally required by the National Environmental Policy Act. It is no minor evasion.

SIPI chairman Barry Commoner commented: "One is forced to ask, is the A.E.C. deliberately hiding important facts about the breeder program from the public?"

The question is a natural one when one couples warnings which have been sounded over the liabilities of commercial nuclearism with the A.E.C.'s history of nuclear power at whatever cost to health and the environment. It's a history heavy with recklessness, duplicities and subterfuges, the environmental costs of which have only begun to be exacted.

If you doubt me on the point, read Roger Rapoport's new book, *The Great American Bomb Machine*.

All of which is to say that the suspicions of professional, scientific groups like the Scientists' Institute toward the A.E.C. are well grounded, indeed. They're also extremely timely, for the A.E.C. is in a period of review and reassessment as a result of the federal court decision of last July charging the A.E.C. with making "a mockery" of the Environmental Protection Act and ordering a complete revision of its rules before it can proceed further with commercial nuclear development.

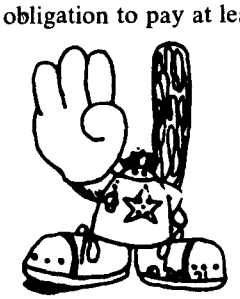
It would be nice to be able to think that the A.E.C. is pursuing that task with industry and conscientious respect for the court's order. But its past is no guarantee that the A.E.C. will not resort anew to half-measures and slick public-relations.

If the watchdog-ing by the SIPI and others makes the A.E.C. more honest with itself and the public, we're all in luck. For what is at stake is nothing less than the future of the environment, and therefore man himself.

Honor Among Nations

All this talk about cutting back U.S. funds for the United Nations has not a few people wondering where American honor has gone with respect to treaties between nations.

Whether the U.S. is forced into the retaliation step proposed by Senator Buckley, or whether it adopts the suave economies suggested by Secretary of State Rogers, it does not have to cut back very far to be in violation of its legal obligation to pay at least 30 percent of the annual UN budget; the present U.S. payment is 31.5 percent.



Then it will be one more U.S. treaty down the drain.

Such a development, some argue, will move the U.S. closer to the forefront of treaty-breaker nations. As it is, we're right up there with the worst of them.

Stephen M. Schwebel examined American proclivity to disregard treaty obligations in a recent *Washington Post*, and found it no partisan matter. "The phenomenon is a bipartisan brew of reaction in a Democratically-led Congress and indifference in a Republican-held White House," said the professor of international law at Johns Hopkins University.

Schwebel cited three current cases besides the UN money issue to make his point:

—U.S. abandonment of its financial obligations to the International Labor Organization; unpaid is half the U.S. assessment for last year and all for this;

—The Senate vote requiring the U.S. to resume imports of chrome from Rhodesia, a violation of Article 25 of the UN Charter providing that members agree to accept and carry out decisions of the Security Council;

—The international aspects of President Nixon's economic program: the surcharge violates U.S. obligations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and the closing of the gold window violates U.S. obligations under the Articles of Agreement of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Schwebel finds treaty violations such as these more significant in their way than those involving certain military pacts, since here the law is clear rather than contentious and the stakes go much less to the security of the nation, actual or perceived. If a nation does not perform honorably on lesser treaty matters, how much more likely is it that it will not perform honorably on major treaties.

Schwebel concludes:

"Performance of treaty obligations is important if the 'credibility' of the United States is important. To be credible is simply to be believed. If the United States persists in violating or threatening to violate undisputed treaty obligations, other states will be the less inclined to credit its fresh commitments. . . . If not the essence of security, then the whole structure of international trade and credit and the whole being and potential of international organization, are bound up with the vitality of treaty obligations. This fundamental of international law and life is so real that it may be hoped that even the realists of the White House staff will recognize—and act upon—it."

Odds and Ends

—A distressing detail from the report of the Pontifical Commission on Peace and Justice dealing with economic imbalances: in 1971, rich countries of the world are 12 times stronger in economic production than poor countries; in the year 2000, at present growth rates, they will be 18 times stronger.

—An interesting reminder from Garry Wills' *Playboy* piece on the Berrigans: at least 11 convicted Catholic war-resisters are still loose in the underground, including one of the Catonsville 9, Mary Moylan.

—Kudos to Krol for his Synod intervention on arms budgets. In the U.S. alone, the cardinal noted, $80.5 billion was spent in 1970 on arms, compared to $46.5 billion on education, $21.3 billion on health, and $4.2 billion on foreign aid. The special scandal of these figures, he added, is that in the U.S. 34 million people and some 10.5 million families are living under the poverty level.

—At Mamaroneck High in Mamaroneck, N.Y., Jesus Freaks are known as the God Squad. JOHN DEEDY

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CORRESPONDENCE

Ecumenism & Theology

Gettysburg, Pa.

To the Editors: It was with extraordinary appreciation that I read Kilian McDonnell's "Ecumenism: Who Cares?" [*Commonweal*, Oct. 15] The article was perceptive, articulate and gave evidence of a theological maturity and profundity that is too seldom encountered, especially too seldom encountered among contemporary Roman Catholic theologians who in their anxious search for "new beginnings" seem frequently to be driving relentlessly toward theological suicide. Such theologians tend indiscriminately to discard every semblance of continuity with the historic Christian Gospel as they progressively dissolve theology into an anthropology which is naive, sentimental, unrealistic and which in no event bears any resemblance to the sober anthropology of Biblical revelation. What apparently embarrasses them above all is precisely the Gospel's "scandal of particularity" without which there may well be religion (either old-fashioned supernaturalism or a new-fashioned religionized secularity) but no gospel for man's fulfillment. Dietrich Bonhoeffer for all that his references to a "religionless Christianity" and "man come of age" have been so distorted as to contradict everything Bonhoeffer intended, reminds us that it was Karl Barth who effectively began the painstaking job of distinguishing between the Gospel and religion. Bonhoeffer paid Barth that tribute precisely in order that the self-identity of the Gospel might be recognized in all its stark uniqueness.

What we meet today among too many of those who in their well-intentioned commitment to man's humanization and especially, again, among Catholics (as see Gregory Baum or, in the same issue of *Commonweal* as Fr. Kilian's article, Sister Elizabeth's thoroughly reductionistic and subjective "theology" of the Eucharist) is a theology so-called which is in fact non-

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PEKING AT THE U.N.

There is a terrible temptation simply to say "I told you so" in reaction to the defeat of the U.S. position on the China seat at the United Nations. In warning of the implications of expelling Taiwan, a nation larger in population than two-thirds of the UN membership, American Ambassador George Bush took a position which was eminently sensible—too sensible, unfortunately, to mesh with years of stubborn U.S. opposition to Peking's admission, and hence not very persuasive. In numerous UN sessions, the United States has had to engage in vigorous arm-twisting to rally sufficient votes on the China question. That this was a dead-end effort, which carried a high price in the coin of resentment, was a point made repeatedly in the liberal press. Yet once again the American "steamroller" tried to hold back the tide, ultimately as futile as the image suggests. The change in U.S. Chinese policy further appeared to tell delegates that America could do things they could not. The result could be observed: dancing in the aisles. Which in turn produced an ugly outburst from the Administration; like an angry schoolmarm or tough drill sergeant, the President barked "Wipe those smiles off your faces" and, to bring the drama full-circle to the resented strongarm tactics, hinted at economic reprisals.

The ideal outcome in the UN would have been membership for both Taiwan and mainland China. The actual, less-than-ideal outcome, however, cannot be fairly described in terms of expelling one government in order to admit another. Taipei, no less than Peking, has insisted to the last that it *alone* is the Chinese government, "the true representative of the 700 million Chinese on the mainland," to quote Chiang Kai-shek's response to the UN vote. The UN delegates, in effect, took both Peking and Taipei at their word and made a clean choice. There are enough grounds for such a position that Washington would have been, and would be, wise to disagree without overreacting. Overreaction propels U.S. spokesmen into rank contradictions, such as the complaint about the equal vote small powers enjoy at the UN with the U.S.: a glance at the voting pattern reveals the extent to which it was America which relied on easily pressured small powers, while European allies, Canada, and large nations like India and Pakistan abstained or opposed the U.S. position.

The admission of Communist China to the UN must be considered an

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opportunity and not a defeat. There should be no retaliation against the world body, no encouragement of the right-wing nationalism which is the true source of the "isolationist" outlook the President professes to oppose, even while he periodically feeds it. Washington should make certain that mainland China understands America's firm opposition to any settlement of the Taiwan question by force. The U.S. should make a reasonable, but not showdown, effort to maintain Taiwan's place in other international agencies. And finally the United States, the Administration, Congress and the wider public, should engage in a thorough China Debate—not the flurry of recriminations which went by that name, and may do so again if the President wishes; but a genuine public discussion which would shed daylight where so far we have only the doubtlessly prudent but nonetheless secret stage-setting of Mr. Kissinger.

This week we are pleased to announce the addition of the following foreign correspondents: in Great Britain, Brian Wicker, Senior Lecturer in English Literature at the University of Birmingham and author of *Towards a Contemporary Christianity*; in Paris, Alain Woodrow, a member of the editorial staff of *Informations Catholiques Internationales*; in Rome, Henry ten Kortenaar, Dutch-born wire-service correspondent, writer and translator; in Dublin, John Horgan, a member of the staff of the *Irish Times*, a Senator in the Irish Parliament and author of *The Church Among the People*. All have contributed to these pages in the past, and we are confident that their regular reports will further enrich the magazine.

KROL FOR DEARDEN?

FOR THE BISHOPS, A NON-AGENDA

The agenda for the November meeting of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (Washington, D.C., Nov. 15-19) has not yet been made public, but that really doesn't matter very much. Everyone connected with the meeting knows that the most significant event to take place will not be put on the agenda.

If it were, it would read something like this: Election of John Cardinal Krol to succeed John Cardinal Dearden as NCCB president. And behind such a simple line, quite possibly, lies the passing of an era—the ending of another chapter that was opened by the Second Vatican Council.

Cardinal Krol's election is considered virtually a certainty. He has working for him that most potent of ecclesiastical charismata, seniority; he has been the vice-president of the NCCB ever since it was formed out of the old National Catholic Welfare Conference in 1966. He is also clearly a man whom most American bishops recognize as a leader and a spokesman—one of their choices to represent them at the synod in Rome. A good man and an able administrator, though plagued with an acute school problem (what bishop is not?) and perhaps more frequently involved in authority conflicts than the average bishop.

Those who engage in ecclesiastical taxonomy usually place Cardinal Krol fairly deep in the "conservative" sector of the usual liberal-conservative split, but such classifications are slippery. Like the archetypal conservative, Cardinal Ottaviani, he has spoken more often and more eloquently on peace than the general run of bishops—not in the "J'accuse" style that some of his critics would probably prefer but with a perceptibly genuine anguish at the destructive folly of war.

He also has, in his own way, another quality usually not associated with conservative churchmen—a readiness to engage in sociological research and opinion-sampling, though not necessarily to be guided by the findings of such studies. Finally, he has the disarming candor of a man who is convinced that what he is doing, however unpopular, is the right thing.

A typical instance is the address he made to the Synod on October 11, presenting the results of a survey of American priests which was made under his supervision and then calmly dismissing the most explosive finding of that survey. A majority of American priests —56 percent—"think celibacy should be a matter of personal choice for diocesan priests," Cardinal Krol told the Synod. ". . . To them the obligation of priestly celibacy appears to be an arbitrary restriction of the freedom of the human person. In their view a greater freedom for priests in this matter would make the religious value of celibacy stand out all the more forcefully for other human beings."

This forthright, accurate and lucid presentation of the view of a majority of American priests, as presented in a survey conducted under official church auspices, was then followed by the expected disclaimer in which, as he made clear, Cardinal Krol was speaking for virtually all of his fellow bishops: "Nevertheless it is the mind of the episcopal conference of the United States that the value of priestly celibacy is most important today for the church and all of humanity and consequently should be retained."

Perhaps the key concepts in Cardinal Krol's way of

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thinking about the church are those of authority and obedience. Obedience, he said on a national television interview in 1969, is "an essential part . . . of the structure of any society" and "a supreme virtue in the church."

The structure of the church, he remarked on the same occasion, "is not subject to change by humans."

Without intending invidious comparisons, we might say that Cardinal Krol seems more representative of the bulk of American bishops than Cardinal Dearden—more static in his outlook on the world and less susceptible (though not necessarily less perceptive) when confronted with ideas outside the framework in which he was trained. Under his presidency, it is likely that things will move a little more slowly at the Bishops' Conference than they have in the last five years—but the Conference has seldom been a dynamic force and the impetus of Vatican II, reflected sometimes during Cardinal Dearden's tenure, seems to be nearly run out.

Another major theme of the bishops' November meeting, which predictably will not be on the agenda, will be the year's outstanding non-achievement at the international Synod—the failure, or rather the refusal, of the American bishops to obtain what a clear majority of their priests requested: a significant relaxation of the celibacy law. This non-achievement went beyond the level of those who try and fail. The bishops are prudent men who knew there was no chance. They had no motivation for the kind of last-ditch effort that might have been made at home in a similarly hopeless situation involving aid to private schools or a new law on abortion. So they did not try to make marriage a real option for the average parish priest. To their credit, however, it must be noted that the priests' opinion was mentioned clearly and without disparagement on the Synod floor. This marks significant progress beyond the recent past. It will not be enough, however, to forestall lines of clerical pickets outside their meeting place.

There will be two ghosts at the November meeting—again, not on the agenda but palpably present—ghosts of men still living in the real world but not in the special milieu of bishops' meetings. They are the ecclesiastical ghosts of men who have resigned from positions of influence in the church—strictly, one who achieved resignation and one who had resignation thrust upon him—former Auxiliary Bishop Bernard J. Kelly of Providence, who resigned in June and Rev. Lous Colonnese, who abruptly stopped being the director of the Latin America Bureau, U.S. Catholic Conference, in September.

Bishop Kelly said his resignation was "due primarily to an abiding sense of frustration, resulting from inability to comprehend or conform to the prevailing Tridentine attitude and policies of the U.S. hierarchy." At their meeting last April, he added, the bishops "studied the priesthood for three days and then reaffirmed the status quo, ignoring the serious recommendations of the National Federation of Priests' Councils, of their own regional input, and of their own scientific report calling for serious changes in the priestly ministry and life style."

His former colleagues were "more concerned about communion in the hand than they are about the war in Vietnam," Bishop Kelly charged. "I see no hope for any future change in their attitude. Since discussion is impossible, I feel obligated in conscience to protest in the only way possible, by my resignation."

Father Colonnese, during his remarkably long and tumultuous tenure at the Latin America Bureau, found a good many other ways of protesting complacency and fixed ideas and he made it clear that his resignation was not voluntary. By his own speeches and writings, his sponsorship of the yeasty annual CICOP meetings and his bureau's constant support of social reform and innovation in Latin America (up to if not beyond the point of violence), the fiery priest has had a significant impact on relations within our hemisphere. He will be missed, but not by most of the bishops at their meeting.

One item that certainly will be on the agenda should be mentioned in the bishops' favor—the remarkable success of the 1970 Campaign for Human Development. Here, the bishops were in their element—fund-raising—and their organization performed splendidly. A total of more than $8.5 million was collected, processed with remarkable efficiency and is already being put at the disposal of nearly 200 (260 by the end of the year) projects, almost all eminently worthwhile and some few even innovative. In the long run, the chances are, there may be some backlash after some community organization and action programs start to grow along their natural lines. But for the moment all is well and the bishops richly deserve the pride they will surely feel.

A final point may come up during the formal discussions (since the press will be absent, the chances are we will never know) and will certainly be mentioned in conversations over coffee or cocktails. This is a question that was asked of Catholics in the most recent *Newsweek* poll and reported in the magazine's Oct. 4 issue: Can you name any decisions made by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops that have been important for your life? The overwhelming majority response—given by 92 percent of the Catholics questioned—was "no." This answer was closer to unanimity than any other in the survey (runners-up were a 78 percent "yes" that a person could be saved if he left the church and a 73 percent "yes" for sex education in parochial schools).

All things considered, these responses may indicate a condition of basic health out there among the people of God.

JOHN OVERBROOK

(John Overbrook is the pseudonym of a veteran bishop-watcher.)

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SEEKERS AFTER JUSTICE

PETER STEINFELS

LAST WEEK I walked into the office of an editor of a major national magazine. An issue of *Commonweal* was open on his desk, showing the headline, "The Politics of Gullibility," an article by Thomas M. Conrad. "Who's Thomas Conrad?" was the first thing the editor said to me.

What I did not know as I answered that question was that Tom Conrad had died the week before. The very day I was chatting about him, his mother was sending me the sad news. Tom had been desperately ill for two years, and when I last talked to him, it was by phone to his bed at the hospital .He was 30 when he died.

Tom graduated from high school a year after Sputnik, and he was the sort of student who was supposed to save America from the Russian threat. A National Merit finalist, in college he won science awards and read papers at meetings of the American Rocket Society, things like "The Drift Transistor in Advanced Space Communications" or "Simplification of Scientific Satellite Telemetry Systems." But Tom also contributed to *The Activist,* an important voice of the early New Left. For the rest of his too brief life he relentlessly pursued his own critical approach to problems of nuclear warfare and the capacities and incapacities of the kinds of thinking which have gone into the making of American foreign policy. He was a fierce democrat, angered by the arrogant claims of the established "experts," who protected themselves by secrecy or manipulating information. Yet he was the opposite of the youthful "Luddite," smashing the computers—an image which he felt the "experts" propagated to browbeat their critics. One of his best *Commonweal* pieces was an acerbic review of a book touting systems analysis as a social cure-all. In it, however, Tom also insisted that "Radical critics of the Establishment's 'business as usual' need every modern weapon if they are to head off disaster; and the most basic weapon is relevant knowledge, including the kinds of broad knowledge involved in systems analysis." Radicals must display the "knowledge and competence and the self-discipline and integrity . . . to compete equally with the 'professionals' of the Establishment on matters of technique while surpassing them on matters of values and vision." That goal, of course, described its author's own life agenda, now tragically cut short.

Tom's death recalled two other writers and activists who died young last summer. James Graham was 41 when he died last June; Arnold S. Kaufman was killed in an airplane accident. For several years in the mid-'60s, Jim Graham was a union lawyer representing poor people in both the North and South. Later he helped organize a community-action group in the Brooklyn slum known as Brownsville. His specialties were labor law and welfare policy; he taught poverty law in New York and Tucson. In 1969 Jim wrote a book, recently published in paperback, called *The Enemies of the Poor.* It is a book full of "facts"; but it is also a very personal document, close to Jim's own experience and full of disappointment toward the institutions he knew best—the church, the unions, the welfare system, the legal profession—because they had let down the poor at the points where they could help the most.

Arnold Kaufman was a professor of philosophy. In his home was conceived the idea of the first teach-in against the war, held at the University of Michigan. He contributed only one article to *Commonweal,* a comment on the 1968 election; but I encountered him at several peace movement meetings. His advice was invariably shrewd. In 1968 he wrote a book for those committed to liberal values but at odds with the liberal establishment's performance, at home or in foreign policy. The book was titled *The Radical Liberal.*

Tom Conrad, Jim Graham, and Arnold Kaufman were very, very different people. They never, as far as I know, met one another; and if they had, they would probably have disagreed on many things. I would not want to "politicize" their deaths, yet it was in connection with politics that I enjoyed my acquaintance with them. I cannot help remark a certain common strain. There were political intellectuals for whom injustice was a human reality, not simply a flaw in a system. They retained the capacity to be truly angered by such injustice, to understand the victim's perspective. Partly for this reason, they were all sorely disappointed by the complacency of established liberalism. Yet their anger and disappointment were harnessed to professional skills and a respect for the specifics of politics. They were militants, but not apocalyptic. They recognized the weaknesses in their own ranks and the strengths of those they criticized. Kaufman's last article, in the August *Dissent,* outlined a political strategy arguing the necessity of both radical change and a broad based political coalition. Last winter and spring, despite his failing health, Jim Graham drafted and redrafted an article for *Commonweal* supporting the Administration's welfare bill as the best compromise available.

There is a tendency to think of the changes America has undergone recently in terms of Yippies, Weathermen and "greening"; and to be accordingly derisive or ecstatic. That is a mistake. It forgets people like Tom Conrad, Jim Graham, Arnold Kaufman. They represent the best of what has moved this nation.

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A SECULAR CASE AGAINST ABORTION ON DEMAND

Proponents of abortion, perhaps unconsciously, employ a theological criterion of personhood

RICHARD STITH

The trouble with the debate over abortion laws is that it has really never begun. Both sides have from the start been blind to the possibility of a public discussion of moral values. They have instead seen values as a matter of private revelation or even taste, and *de gustibus non disputandum*. Thus political pressure rather than rational discussion of the issues has been characteristic of the recent legislative history of abortion reform. Not surprisingly, the "debate" has now culminated in pressure for abortion "on demand," rather than abortion only with a reasonable justification. Abortion "on demand" is abortion given to anyone on request, provided only that it be medically feasible. The "on demand" means that abortion is considered a value-neutral technical operation which does not need justification. The public legal world of shared values passes away to leave behind agreement only on what is an efficient abortion. Even continuous debate over precisely *what* might justify abortion would tend to unite us as a community, if not in agreement at least in the hope of convincing each other of our arguments. Abortion "on demand" leaves us with nothing to say to each other as citizens.

Yet abortion need not have been considered a merely private or religious matter. I believe that the "proponents" (if I may be permitted an abbreviation for "those who lobby for abortion 'on demand' ") have failed to see what is publicly at stake: respect for human life and for their fellow citizens. In giving some examples of what they do not see, I am not arguing for a specific kind of abortion law. I am only arguing that the whole matter is still worth debating, and therefore that reasonable men and women should oppose abortion "on demand."

Proponents often dismiss the charge of homicide by asserting that the fetus cannot be proven to be a person. But of course it cannot be proven not to be a person either. Moreover, we agree that it is a person, entitled to legal protection, as soon as it is born. So the proponents would have to argue that some drastic change, from non-person to person, must have taken place at birth or at some earlier moment, unless they wish also to advocate infanticide. Medical evidence shows no such sharp discontinuity in the development of the embryo. Indeed, science could hardly begin to explain these developmental processes if it did not assume that the child is actually emerging in them, rather than that the fetus is a sort of blind growth which might by chance become a person. If the proponents wish to allege that the fetus is not a person before a certain point, the burden of proof is upon them. Let them make a convincing argument that there is a "metaphysical" difference between a fetus and an infant, in spite of physical similarity. For example, if they wish to make birth the decisive criterion of personhood, they must show some difference in kind between a premature infant and an infant in the womb at the same stage of development—or between a fetus destroyed within the uterus and a twin brother by chance viable upon ejection, whose life we try to save.

Why don't the proponents of abortion see the need to prove that the fetus is not a person in order to say that abortion is not killing? Ironically, the proponents themselves must be surreptitiously and perhaps unconsciously using a particular *theological* criterion of per-

RICHARD STITH, *a previous contributor, is a doctoral candidate in religious ethics at Yale.*

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sonhood. There just seems to be no secular reason why a being at an earlier stage of development should not be presumed to be the same individual as at a later stage, even if his appearance changes. Is the first sprout of an oak tree not the same plant as the fully developed tree? Only if they imagine that the person does not *grow*, but is somehow infused whole as a "soul" into a merely animal "body," could they consider the fetus different in kind from some later stage of human development.

Why does the proponents' theology postpone "ensoulment" to some time near birth? I suppose that most of us treat other human beings as persons because we somehow "see," or otherwise sense, their personhood. However, the unborn child is hidden from view—is neither readily seeable, nor even nameable (because its sex is unknown). Perhaps this hiddenness accounts in part for the proponents' abstract conception of the fetus as a "body" without a "soul," as mere matter without a form and direction.

(Not that this hiddenness would be a *reason*, as opposed to a *cause*, for considering the fetus non-human —just as distance and skin tone should not be allowed to obscure the humanity of the Vietnamese. More education might help in both cases.)

Even if we did not consider the unborn child a person, it is clearly "human life." ("It's not an Airedale," as a friend of mine has remarked.) All other human life receives legal protection. So far at least, we do not have minimum standards that life must meet. We protect the sick and the deformed from casual slaughter, although it might be argued that they have a far less human future before them than does a healthy fetus. Indeed, we even provide protection for *dead* human bodies. It is illegal to dig up and destroy dead bodies. Cannibalism is not something done "on demand." Yet the fetus is disposed of in abortion as though it were cancer or excrement. If we safeguard the dignity of human flesh even in a dead body, a body without a future, how much more should we care for an unborn child, a child in whom a human future surges!

Sometimes the proponents will grant that if one begins with the value of the infant, one is logically forced to accord a similar value to the fetus. However, they argue, if one accords such a value to the fetus, then one is logically forced to accord it to the sperm and to the ovum, and then to the testes and to the ovaries, *ad infinitum*. Which supposedly goes to show that one shouldn't take logic too seriously. Yet the blindness in their argument is serious. To see no difference between an unfertilized and fertilized egg is to fail to distinguish *probability* from *potentiality*. The unfertilized ovum is incomplete. Its probability of development depends on the *chance* that another half will join it to determine its future form. The fertilized egg, however, contains *completely* its own genetic "map" for development. All it asks from its environment is, essentially, food rather than form. (The issue would be very different if the mother's body took an active part in shaping and organizing the fetus during pregnancy.) Unlike between a fetus and an infant, there is a qualitative difference between an unfertilized egg and a fertilized one. This difference might be summarized most succinctly in saying that the fertilized egg *grows*, while the unfertilized egg does not.

Bodies as Objects

The argument that every woman has a right to "control over her own body" seems likewise blind. This argument *begins* by viewing our bodies as "objects" to be controlled and by atomistically assuming that each object is separable from every other object. But we do not "control" our bodies. We *are* our bodies, and our bodies are constantly connected to the world by myriad needs and obligations. Insofar as we do not have a right to control over ourselves, because we are required to respond to the obligations of community life, we do not have a right to control over our bodies either. How else could we pay taxes, yield the right of way, or obey any other law if not with our bodies?

The law does, of course, prohibit assaults on a person's body. We do have a right to be "let alone," which includes a right to protection, rather than control, of our bodies. But if the mother's body is "let alone," she will give birth! It is abortion itself which is an intrusion upon the woman's body. Moreover, abortion is not even "private" in the sense that it is done by the woman alone against herself alone. Besides the unborn child, at least the doctor, the state, and the father are involved. Even if the woman were to have a right to mutilate her own body or the growing life within it, the doctor does not. He could be held liable if he were to cut off a woman's leg "on demand," without medical necessity. Likewise he ought to be held liable for destroying the unborn without a reason. Even if we were to consider the fetus to be part of the mother, surely it should have the same protection from mutilation as does a leg. The state is also involved in abortions, at least insofar as it prescribes technical medical procedures, provides financial assistance, and repeals previously existing abortion laws. (Thus abortion "on demand" may well be unconstitutional, because the state is engaged in deprival of life without "due process" of law.) Finally, especially the father (and perhaps also society) has a very strong interest in the unborn child. After all, the child is his as much as it is the mother's. She has no right to kill it arbitrarily, anymore than a trustee can arbitrarily destroy that with which he has been entrusted.

Now, both the father and society are often unconscionably negligent in protecting their "interest." They "entrust" the bearing and rearing of the child solely to

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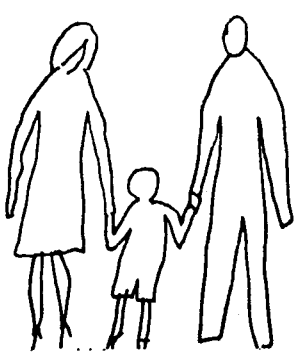
the mother and go on their merry ways. Yet they have the audacity to punish the mother for wanting the same freedom from the burdens of a child which they enjoy. No wonder proponents of abortion attack such a system as "unfair"! It is unfair. The father and society have been totally irresponsible in failing to aid and comfort the child and the mother, especially the unwed mother. But why not strive for equal responsibility rather than equal irresponsibility? Surely, "two wrongs don't make a right" is a most elementary moral principle. We should have, at least, tighter paternity laws, more part-time jobs so that husband and wife can share childbearing, and severe penalties for any discrimination against unwed mothers. State and private agencies should also encourage and assist couples to adopt children rather than to have their own. By adopting children, we would open our private worlds to share the distress of our sister-citizens. And by *wanting* to adopt children, we would miraculously help to stop both population growth and the growth of that ethos which considers children burdens to be avoided. But instead of asking for these reforms, around which we could begin to build a true community, most proponents seem to tolerate and even encourage paternal and social irresponsibility, as long as the woman is likewise not made responsible for the child. Only an ideal of universal ir-



responsibility can account for the proponents' extraordinary answer to the "fairness" question.

Again, I am not arguing against more liberal abortion laws. I am saying only that the fetus has a public value, primarily as organized and growing human life, and therefore that its destruction requires a public justification. Abortion "on demand" should not be permitted. We ought not to imitate New York. However, given the extreme hardships which sometimes surround pregnancy, we might wish to legalize abortions in certain circumstances. Nor do I argue that the courts or a panel of doctors ought to be the judge of whether a particular woman's case fits the approved circumstances. Perhaps the woman alone should judge whether her case fits. Once we agree that abortion requires a justification, specifying both the justifications and the persons we would trust as judges would be the difficult task of public dialogue.

The first step to dialogue would be to treat seriously the opinions of those who oppose abortion. Most proponents act as though abortion "on demand" were just another political issue, like electing a President or building a new road. They seem to assume that once all the lobbying and voting are over, we will all go quietly home and carry on as usual. But many Americans consider at least some forms of abortion to be murder. *Murder!* It is not just another political issue, but is an assault on their most fundamental moral convictions. Many proponents say they consider an abortion not to be an issue of conscience at all, but a matter of what is convenient for the individual. Indeed, since liberalized but still restrictive abortion laws could presumably permit all morally appropriate abortions, the *only* additional abortions permitted by an "on demand" clause would be those done merely for convenience. Even someone who thinks that all morality is purely a subjective matter must see the subjective difference in intensity, in unselfishness, and in centrality to conscience, between the positions of those who oppose and of those who favor abortion "on demand." Yet the opinions of those in opposition are not respected. These opinions are belittled as mere "private religious beliefs," in spite of the fact that they are publicly understandable, and have a longer sanction in public tradition than have those of the proponents.

Even if a majority of citizens did favor legalization, and I think it does not, convictions so deep as those of the opponents of abortion must be taken into account if they are not to be wholly alienated from the body politic. And the fact that no one who does not believe in abortion will be forced to engage in abortion (as yet) does not help. It is like telling someone in Nazi Germany, "Don't worry, your hands are clean. *You* don't have to guard the camps." In order to go on supporting a government which he thinks kills the innocent, a person must surely begin to lose whatever moral standards he has. A nation of amoral beasts may be the result—either that or revolt. At least one New York state senator refused to agree to any aspect of the new budget, as long as it contained money "to kill babies." Other citizens might begin a tax revolt, refusing to finance what they consider murder. For the same reason (murder), our government may already be losing its support among many good people, because of the war in Vietnam. But at least there the government offers "justifications," which can be discussed and refuted. Abortions "on demand" require no justification whatsoever, in the eyes of the proponents. They are considered merely "private affairs." How would we feel if President Nixon were to call the war his "private affair," and to refuse to discuss it? Our alienation and frustration would then perhaps be equivalent to that which the opponents of abortion must feel when abortion "on demand" is legalized. Yet these feelings are ignored by the proponents

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as they maneuver toward legislative success.

It is sometimes argued that the population explosion is a justification for encouraging as many abortions as possible. Now, I assume that the proponents do not contend that anything that cuts down on population is *per se* good, since surely they would not approve of famine, war, or disease. Most people who make this argument, I think, mean that we should not get *more* people. They are for preventing human life rather than killing it. I certainly agree with them about the need for birth control of some kind. But in this essay, I have argued that in the unborn child we've already *got* human life. It's too late to argue for birth control!

Some may be so concerned about the population explosion that they really do favor killing existing human life, in order to preserve the lives of the rest of us. They would favor killing the unborn because they are the least developed, and most easily disposed of, part of the human race. Such an argument is at least an honest one. But once we declare the unborn unworthy to live, would we necessarily stop there? Might we not eventually execute the deformed, the old, or the unintelligent?

The underlying assumption made by the proponents of abortion "on demand" appears to be this: dependency entails control. They seem to assume that if something is within our power, is dependent on us, then we have a right to total control over it, even to the point of destroying it. Now, the unborn child is clearly and inevitably totally dependent for nurture on its mother, so dependent that it cannot even be seen and grasped as a separate object. Therefore, the proponents can conclude that she has the right to destroy it. The same logic would make the proponents ignore the humanity of the destroyed unborn child. For if to be human is to have rights, and if to be dependent is to have no rights, then nothing which is dependent can be considered human. Humanity becomes characterized by individual independence or self-sufficiency. Indeed, the only argument which I have ever heard which sought to prove that the fetus is non-human is that it is not "self-sufficient" or "viable." I suspect that the proponents may think that since the unborn child cannot be independently seen and grasped, it simply does not exist, except perhaps subjectively.

Ordinary moral sensibility leads to a different conclusion. We generally feel that when someone is dependent on us, we are responsible for him. We do not thereby acquire rights over him. If anything, he acquires "rights" over us—not a right to just anything, but the right to be *cared* for, to be helped toward a healthy development. Dependency entails care, not control. Our arbitrary freedom is thus limited by having others depend on us. For example, a king ought to be far less free to follow his whims than are his subjects, insofar as they are dependent on him. Otherwise he is a tyrant. Precisely because the child is utterly dependent on the mother for its very existence, she has the greatest possible responsibility to care for it. And dependency does not make it less human. We are all dependent on others, although our dependency is not so focused as is the child's on its mother. And we, too have a kind of "right" to be cared for by those on whom we depend. A pregnant woman may not have a right to total control over the child, but both she and the child have a right to care from those on whom they depend, the father and society. Being cared for by others does not degrade our humanity, but elevates it. If the unborn child depends on us to recognize its very existence, it, too, is made no less human. To be held in memory or in anticipation, to be *believed* in by other men from whom he is partially or entirely hidden—that is one of the greatest honors a person can receive.

Care rather than control is, of course, possible only if we believe that the future is not wholly our invention. The ultimate issue is not whether we believe in abortion but whether we believe in pregnancy. If things and people are "pregnant," if they have "promise," if they "grow"—in short, if they have *meaning*—then we have no right to impose our whims on them like tyrants. If we do interfere with them, we must at least have a justification. Such an attitude is no doubt difficult in a technological age bent on control of all things. Yet it is required not only for morality but for all understanding of nature. Hopefully the ecological issues are helping us realize that we cannot with impudence impose just any future on our natural environment. And if we can at least continue to believe that women can be pregnant, that they can carry the future within them, perhaps someday we may also see the "pregnancy," the meaning, of men and things.

JACK LINDEMAN

SOUL

It is itself without tongues
saying all & nothing simultaneously.
It has neither wings nor legs
yet plays among clouds
like eagle & airplane,
& runs faster
than cheetah or Canonero II.
Wondrously it lives without dying.
It is something not seen
which the body builds itself around
coil upon coil of multiplying cells
& when the ribs are crushed
it miraculously survives.

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THE EXILE OF PIRATES & PRINCES

Escapist films versus the Puritan-intellectual complex

TOM S. RECK

A chance glance at the movie page of a Mexican newspaper can bring a warm rush of nostalgia to anyone whose 1930-1940s' youth was spent away in the dark delicious reaches of his local movie palace. In a country where it is still Movies and not yet Films, cinema in Mexico remains at that wonderful unrespectable level of escapism which lets it only Be, without having to Mean also.

The Guadalajara listings for a given day might in include *El Hijo del Capitan Sangre (The Son of Captain Blood), Click! Fotographo de Modeles, La Princesa Hippie, La Venganza (Vengeance) de Galino Barrera, Dellinger Has Muerto (Dillinger, You Are Dead),* and *Mission Cumplida,* the equivalent of the now-deceased Hollywood escapist fare or of the "B-picture" programmers of the 1940s. Plus, Yankee-made yarns that we demote largely to drive-ins and second bills: *The Southern Star* (George Segal, Ursula Andress), *Midas Run* (Richard Crenna, Anne Heywood), *Juaquin Murrieta* (Ricardo Montalbano, Ina Balin), recent U.S. releases unheard of to our young who claim film cultism.

And Guadalajara's Olimpia Theatre recently played what would have answered the prayers of any 1940s' 14-year-old, the escapists' definitive double-feature: *Ali Baba y los 40 Ladrones* (read *40 Thieves*), with Jon Hall, Maria Montez, and Turhan Bey; and *Arabian Nights,* with Jon Hall, Maria Montez, and Sabu—two films which any self-respecting child of the movies sat through 2½ times on each of his three viewings.

We went to the movies as you would take ice cream (you liked it all), or as you would play baseball. There are special moments, when you hit a home run or when you make a flying-leap catch, but by and large the whole experience is good, and there is no real attempt to evaluate the quality of a given inning or formulate rigorous criteria by which to judge a rally. So we ran off to the movies several times a week, each with his own special favorite thrills, but immersed in the pleasure of the whole, with only our goosebumps to guide us.

That we would sublimate our fantasies into the respectability of school, job and marriage was inevitably correct, but for movies to lose their innocence by becoming films is a matter of sentimental loss and real resentment for those of us who had movies as nannies; the intellectualism giving rise to pedagogy is true sacrilege.

In the movies' own Age of Innocence, when they existed as an end in themselves and were not called upon to mean something about psychology, philosophy, or politics, they were the fulfillment of "adolescent" dream-wishes, since stigmatized by a world which tolerates and promotes the "adult" fantasies of politics and war.

At the time I came to know movies as my own, the escapist stars of the Silent Screen (Theda Bara, Valentino, Fairbanks) were legends which museums and retrospectives were not yet violating by reincarnation. The 1930s' escapist fare, the purity of adventure in *Captain Blood,* the ethos of excitement in *The Adventures of Robin Hood,* was available in occasional re-releases only. Most of our movie hours were spent building up special indenture to the second-class Hollywood studios (Universal, Columbia) and the unprestigious efforts of the major studios which faithfully cranked out for us the Arabian Fantasies, the Jungle Romances, the Sea Tales, the Animal Adventures, and the Locale Musicals.

In the 1950s the Western courageously upheld the last vestige of even a compromised escapism against the creeping threat of the new adult Western via *High Noon.* Then, by the 1960's, it was gone.

Ali Baba

The epitome of the Arabian Fantasy, *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves,* contains virtually all of the endearing conventions of the genre, totally familiar to be sure, but the authentic escapist no more puts them down as clichés than he would his favorite meal because he had eaten it twenty-dozen times before. And anyway, behind the crass commerciality and flamingly corny technicolor (now wonderfully faded if you've seen it recently), *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves* is chock full of all sorts of mannerisms that belong to the finest traditions of romanticism. In the evil Mongrels' murder of Ali Baba Senior and the flight of his young son is the idea of the rightful ruler done out of his due, enough to enkindle the suspicion in any dreamer that he too has undiscovered nobility. (In my Texas this meant maybe a

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rich uncle in New York.) The hidden cave which opens only to the code "Open Sesame!" alerts all those archetypal urgings for what is secret (from sacred fraternity rites to classified CIA data).

The very idea of the benevolent thief catches the basic instinct of ethical justification for taking at will, evolved from prehistoric plundering through Robin Hood to 1960 looters. The caches of precious jewel and stone majestically stored in the cave strike a universal human chord that means awe for what glitters and shines our reflection back at us.

The enforced marriage of the beautiful and the good with the bad and the ugly (happily prevented by Ali Baba) pulls at that part of us that thrills to near-injustice and rich sacrifice. The climax (Is it oil in the forty jars or are the forty thieves in the forty jars?) has the quality of mythic puzzle and trick.

With an old-uncle type confidant for the hero (this time Andy Devine), and a eunuch-type confidant for the heroine (this time Turhan Bey), to offer balancing loyalty and trust against such massive treachery.

All of this encased in stilted language that serves to render it respectable by virtue of formality and Biblical tenor. (Full of "It is written"; and "It grows late"; and quaint metaphors such as "I am the sword hanging over your head.") And bathed in a visual eroticism of sheer flowing curtains, turbaned and spangled ladies with veiled faces, mysterious pool reflections, forbidden harem chambers, phallic tower and dome, and hot sand and sun.

Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves is only one of the 1940 Arabian Fantasies. *A Night in Paradise, A Thousand and One Nights, Baghdad, Sinbad the Sailor, Kismet, Song of Scheherazade, Salome, Where She Danced, Flame of Araby, The Magic Carpet, The Desert Song.* Some of them, like *The Thief of Baghdad,* in fantastic encounter with bottled genie and giant spider, actually evoked a trippy vision of surrealistic delight.

Into the 1950s the Arabian Fantasy moved only furtively in the potboiler factories, under the auspices of Rock Hudson (*The Golden Blade*) and Tony Curtis (*The Prince Who Was a Thief*) before they, too, graduated to "better" material.

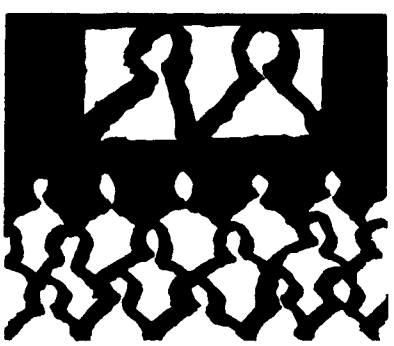
The Arabian Fantasy's second cousin, the Jungle Romance, also reached for mythic dimensions beneath the good-old-fashioned-fun. In John Ford's *The Hurricane*, actually a kind of masterpiece from the 1930s, Jon Hall and Dorothy Lamour sketched for the masses the idea of the Noble Savage much better than Rousseau and Conrad ever could, especially when laid against the corrupt colonialism of pompous Raymond Massey and bitchy Mary Astor. Jon Hall's psychic aversion to his unjust imprisonment, his compulsive need to be "free as a bird," puts existential freedom in understandable, if simple, terms.

And the spectacular storm envisions Nature and its supernatural power as far more than mere inconvenience or chance catastrophe. In our adult arrogance we have lost our awe of wind, water, whirlpool, quicksand, crocodile, or nature's other frightening devices for demonstrating strength. They no longer take our breath by virtue of their very power.

The Hurricane, surely the best, only led to other Jungle Romances, long relegated to shady obscurity: *Jungle Princess, Her Jungle Love, Beyond the Blue Horizon, Song of the Islands, White Savage, Bird of Paradise,* and even such comic extensions as Abbott and Costello's *Pardon My Sarong* and Crosby and Hope's *Road to Zanzibar.*

The Tarzan series, never able to rise above the Saturday afternoon kid-show, or the Saturday night camp-show, actually make marvelous statements about natural man and 20th Century decadence. Upon examination, Johnny Weismuller's *Tarzan Goes to New York* speaks more eloquently about the subject than the laureled Czech film which did the art-house run a few years ago, *The Death of Tarzan.*

Maria Montez' *Cobra Woman* offered twin sisters, one good, one bad, the good one being the rightful ruler



who has been displaced by the bad. Add a jungle tribe of snake-worshipers' being willingly led into the mouth of an active volcano for sacrifice, and you have enough material for and from Freud, Jung, and Masters and Johnson.

By virtue of setting itself, the Sea Tales fall within the finest traditions of romanticism. The idea of shipboard voyage is the evocation of every human impulse for journey and discovery, respectable in the words of Melville and Dana, but in disrepute when visual, as with Errol Flynn in *The Sea Hawk* or Tyrone Power in *The Black Swan,* two incredible pirate tales.

Piracy, especially on the high seas, is actually an expression of the suppressed germ of revolt, a very serious matter, but here charitably muted with thrilling powder and sword battles; proud victories against nature's best weapons—storm and maybe octopus or other beast of brine; indulgence of the flogging or the gangplank; and that most splendid possibility (since it allows a "dropping out" without guilt or even decision): the shipwreck on distant shore.

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Here again the list of these 1940s Sea Tales which reflected and aggravated our archetypes is long; *Adventures of Captain Fabian, The Spanish Main, Swiss Family Robinson, Frenchman's Creek, Reap the Wild Wind, The Wake of the Red Witch, Captain Kidd, Against All Flags, The Princess and the Pirate;* with the second-cousin swashbuckler (*The Swordsman, The Corsican Brothers, The Adventures of Don Juan, The Three Musketeers, Scaramouche, At Sword's Point*) equally around.

The Animal Adventures were certainly escapist; and were fantasy in the respect that the non-human heroes were either human or larger-than-human. Beneath the veneer of stylized and sentimental family relationships, splendid outdoor scenery, and innocuous adolescent romances, was a vision that could see *My Friend Flicka* as metaphor for individuality, perseverance and benign intelligence; that could give the horse *Smoky* all the anxieties and courage of existential man; that could turn trotting into a Hemingway pure-response in *Home in Indiana.*

Actually the Animal Adventure reached for (or skirted) complicated levels of identity, since the fantasy called for wishes to become dog, horse, or cub; asked for an acknowledgment of the animal as god-figure, to be respected, yea verily worshiped.

The symbology of the Animal Adventure worked best when set in Ireland or Scotland, since the emerald terrain could stand for benevolent nature, and the thatched cottage with warm hearth was an ideal representation of the sanctity of home and family. What would a 1940s fourteen-year-old have given to have a dog and Donald Crisp romp with him across the moors.

The Animal Adventures were always peopled by nice old persons (Edmund Gwenn, Dame May Whitty, Reginald Owen, Ann Revere, Frank Morgan, Nigel Bruce), who represented kindly wisdom and companionship before age came to be political to young cinemaists.

They may be hard to separate in themselves (How were *My Friend Flicka, Lassie Come Home, The Red Stallion* and *Hills of Home* different from *Thunderhead: Son of Flicka, Courage of Lassie, The Red Pony,* and *Thunder in the Valley?*) but it does not matter since the sum-total was so special. You knew it all was over when in 1950 that mule Francis started talking, and the whole wonder of being an animal was turned into a mockery for Donald O'Connor to mug over.

Especially for girls in the 1940s, the musical perhaps even more efficiently offered fantasy, from the mystique of making-it-in-vaudeville (*When My Baby Smiles at Me, Mother Wore Tights*) to the time-machine perspective into past milieus. *Coney Island* was New York at the turn of the century; *Wabash Avenue* was Chicago in the 1800s. Especially functional were those which could transport the viewer to some exotic locale. So that before air-travel exposed the various capitals as only Hiltons-away-from-home, we were free to build up wonderful if bogus visions of Rio de Janeiro (*One Night in Rio, Nancy Goes to Rio, Road to Rio, Thrill of Brazil*), Miami, (*Moon Over Miami*), Havana (*That Night in Havana*), Buenos Aires, (*Down Argentine Way*), Mexico City, (*Holiday in Mexico, Masquerade in Mexico*). or San José (*Carnival in Costa Rica*).

Before the form sadly fell on bad days, the Locale Musical captured all the archetypal yearnings for far away and forbidden places—muted by music and comic relief so as not to offend American nationalism or puritanism. People like Carmen Miranda and Xavier Cugat became in the secondary roles just the right acceptable intrusion of eroticism into the apple pieness of stars Alice Faye, Betty Grable, Don Ameche and John Payne. The fruit and flower piled high on Carmen's head was actually metaphoric; and beyond its quaint campy appeal is a bizarre and surrealistic accumulation of everything we understand, and do not understand, as erotically Latin.

Behind the camouflage of silly situational plots of misidentities was hid a passionate Latin tempo, dished out in tolerable doses through the beat of the music, the noise of the marachas, the gaucho-sleeved dancers, the potted jungle ferns and the fireworks alight in the sky.

The principle of Locale even worked with innocuous American backdrops like *Sun Valley Serenade* and *Weekend at the Waldorf,* in which cast and story also took a backseat to let setting serve as *auteur.*

The special charm of the escapist films was its innocence to its own potential. It knew only that it was showing sufficient profit-margin to justify its existence. When it taught, it was to unsophisticated audiences which would later learn to pay attention only when the same lessons were drowned in excess baggage that made them intellectual exercises and not delightful universal truths.

When I teach college classes in the history and aesthetics of the film, I do my talking about Bergman's symbology and Bunuel's world-view; and that kind of thing is well and good and offers recompense; but it is not the same reward that watching Errol Flynn triumph over Claude Rains in *The Sea Hawk* brought. That belongs to a whole world of innocence and dream that even for the young and innocent may no longer be available, since it is not around on television and since "kid" movies today means stuff like *The Computer That Wore Tennis Shoes* and *The Horse in the Gray Flannel Suit.* And anyway the escapist movies that fed my fantasy in the 1940s were as much for "adults" as for "kids."

Their psychic and mythic accuracy should never intrude upon their simple usefulness of providing pleasure, a function the puritan-intellectual complex automatically judged suspect. Although it has been tried, there can really be no dialogue with the academicians and auteur-

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ists, for it is simply a weighting of frivolity against solemnity. Pauline Kael's affinity for the "good-natured crumminess" of the "trash" film is not really right, since it calls for a kind of Southern paternalism toward a faithful and vaguely amusing black servant. Nor is her logical defense that "trash has given us an appetite for art" necessary for the true devotee, who simply chooses good hearty fare over gourmet delicacies.

The price we paid for the right to discuss films over cocktails without apology was a voluntary handing over, in the name of progress and art, of some therapy, much innocence and more pleasure. It must remain a matter of simple preference, since the charge that nostalgia numbs taste is probably correct; but why not? There is no real question that Federico Fellini will outlive Maria Montez. It is just that "art" belongs to eternity. Ali Baba belongs to me.

DECLINE AND FALL

THE SCREEN

Of the three new Italian films presented at the Ninth New York Film Festival, the most ambitious is Pasolini's *The Decameron.* All other things being equal (i.e., none of the films being its director's best), *The Decameron* is certainly the most noteworthy of the three as well. What Pasolini seems to have liked in Boccaccio's fourteenth century classic is its casual, episodic structure. As in his *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew,* made several years ago, Pasolini is here trying to muck up that glossy image of history moviegoers acquired from big-budget epics.

One way to do so is to use a scenario that doesn't reduce history to a slick novel. Of the one hundred tales told in *The Decameron,* Pasolini has chosen ten almost, it would seem, at random. There is no development, no Big Moment and no finale in this film: in fact, Pasolini has discarded even the slight framework Boccaccio provided by having a single company of tellers for his tales. Moreover, the content of the tales is as much an affront to conventional cinematic versions of history as their formlessness is. These tales are all scatological and bawdy. Their humor is low-class and vulgar so they won't inspire either awe or bourgeois prurience, the two responses to which historical films have conditioned audiences.

Ever since his first film, the neo-realistic *Accatone,* Pasolini has insisted on the kind of truth that stinks. *The Decameron* furthers these fine aesthetic principles, and even extends Pasolini's skepticism into a new area . . . that of art itself. The artist Giotto appears in a brief episode in *The Decameron.* In addition to playing Giotto in the film, Pasolini has added new episodes to the role. The point of both the original and the supplementary material is that art and artists must be freed from our idealizations too. In Boccaccio's episode Giotto laughs at himself, and in Pasolini's he laughs at his work. Giotto's last laugh, which he has in the final scene of the film, is clearly directed at Pasolini's work too. It's a pleasure to see a film that isn't self-righteous or sanctimonious.

At a press conference during the Film Festival, Ermanno Olmi said much that clarifies what went wrong in his new film, *In the Summertime.* He explained, for one thing, that the hero he wanted to present this time could only be shown as a parable figure, not as a realistic hero. This remark seems more ironical than the film itself, for the non-professional who plays the lead in the film really is what the film depicts him as being. While working on his last film Olmi discovered a man named Renato Parrachi, who happened to work free-lance coloring maps for a textbook publisher. Determined to use Parrachi in a film, Olmi then wrote a script about a character called the Professor, who works free-lance coloring maps for a textbook publisher.

But Olmi has endowed his hero with other talents as well. The Professor's real calling is heraldry; and in order to find some outlet for his constant research and reproduction of coats of arms, he gulls middle-class patrons into buying noble credentials from him. Though this activity eventually lands the Professor in jail, he has first found a girl—she is the Italian counterpart of the Avon lady—who can truly appreciate his eccentricities.

At the press conference Olmi also pointed out that though his films have before avoided symbolism, a great deal of it was unavoidable, and appropriate, in this film. As a consequence of this thinking, the Professor spends much of his time making phone calls to someone who is never home or looking up at a phallic building across from his apartment. According to Olmi the former represents the Professor's "non-communication with the modern world," while the latter shows him confronting "a totem of this society to which he cannot assimilate and which overshadows him." It may be hard to imagine how these symbols could be appropriate to anything, but consider some of the lines spoken in this film. At one point, for instance, the Professor assures his "Princess" that "the commonest object reveals the soul of the man who made it." At another point, when he has been brought to trial, the following exchange occurs between the Princess and the prosecutor:

Princess: "I am a Princess."

Prosecutor (fortissimo): "Then I'm His Majesty!"

Princess: "At this moment you are not even a gentleman." Olmi is right: the symbolism and the dia-

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logue in this film deserve each other.

Inflated as Olmi's interpretation of his film is, it is generally more interesting than the film itself. This is what's wrong with the film. It looks as if it were only a by-product of Olmi's analysis of it. At the press conference Olmi referred to the Professor as a "Chaplinesque conception," but of course Chaplin never thought of his own hero, the tramp, in such abstracted terms. Chaplin's satire of modern times came across because Chaplin thought of the tramp as a real man with practical problems, not a symbol with a purely symbolic relationship to his surroundings. Concepts like the totemic building and unanswered phone calls ultimately do overwhelm the Professor, though not in the way Olmi hoped. They just squash all the life out of him, leaving behind a fossil of Chaplin comedy and little else.

Judging by Marco Bellochio's press conference at the festival, his new film, *In the Name of the Father*, fails because of problems similar to Olmi's. He has tried to do something that looks better on the drawing board than on the screen. It isn't sentimental satire that Bellochio is after, but black comedy—a comedy even blacker than his own last feature, *China Is Near*. *In the Name of the Father* is in effect a blow-up of a detail from *China Is Near*. A secondary character in the earlier film is an autocratic young man who virtually takes over the administration of the boarding school he attends. *In the Name of the Father* is primarily the story of such a usurper. But as with any detail blown up out of proportion, the artist's execution now looks ham-handed and crude. An idea that worked on a smaller scale has been exaggerated until it is no longer either funny or coherent.

According to Bellochio's interview the film is held together by the relationship between two characters, Angelo and Tino. Again, the interpretation *sounds* plausible. Angelo and Tino live at opposite ends of the film's social spectrum. The former is the most intelligent of the school's upper classmen, while the latter is the most lame-brained of the mental defectives who work in the kitchen. Yet an alliance between Angelo and Tino seems natural enough when it occurs because each leads a revolt against school authorities. Moreover, as Bellochio pointed out, much of what Tino says is nonsense paralleling Angelo's statements. The point, presumably, is that the obvious idiocy of the one exposes the disguised madness of the other.

But this relationship, so neat in theory, is obliterated in cinematic practice by everything else Bellochio has thrown into the film. There are so many vignettes and sub-plots that we are soon incapable of seeing any design in this hodgepodge. Many episodes seem elaborations on a statement that has never been made in the first place. It's as if Bellochio edited out the establishing shots in certain scenes, assuming that the result would automatically be funnier because it was crazier. Whatever the cause, the effect is to suggest that Bellochio couldn't decide whether he wanted a realistic film or a surrealistic one. He has ended up with a work that alternates chaotically between the two.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

BOOKS

Are we moving toward a sexuality bereft of concupiscence and compulsion?

Nun, Witch, Playmate: The Americanization of Sex

HERBERT W. RICHARDSON

Harper & Row, $4.95

ALBERT R. DiIANNI

One of the major errors of contemporary American philosophy (due to its admirable but exaggerated sensitivity to man's creativity) is the belief that all human behavior is language. It is the belief that human behavior, like language, is completely conventional. It is the error of historicism for which all of human reality and meaning is culturally constituted and arises out of man's free symbolizing capacity. Such a philosophy does not openly reject the natural or instinctual component in human behavior but subtly emasculates it. It does so by construing human instincts as unvectored dynamisms, as urges whose energy is from nature but whose direction arises, directly or as a feedback effect, only from voluntary human decisions. If there is any universal human nature it is defined as adaptability or plasticity, which is to define and discard the notion of nature in the same breath.

Corollary to such a philosophy is the tendency to de-eroticize sexuality. The instinct of sexuality is emptied of all natural structure. It becomes an eyeless force which can be completely programmed by man's free will and be plied to serve any of man's desires rather than his biological needs. The unlikely companions in the title of Richardson's book, *Nun, Witch, Playmate* are symbols pointing up some of the cultural changes which have taken place in human history *vis à vis* sexuality. The Christian emphasis on virginity (Nun) has both expressed and fostered the growth of a new type of

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consciousness and a new possibility for human fulfillment different from Abrahamic seed-consciousness and the paternal fulfillment of patriarchal times. The burning of the witch symbolizes the rejection of the "motherhood" of which woman is capable. (The de-witched woman par excellence is Mary, a perfect lady.) Today's spouse is not merely wife, mother or lady but a playmate for she provides a multi-faceted intercourse, conversational as well as orgasmic. According to Professor Richardson, sexual desire is being Americanized or spiritualized; it is being transmuted into the desire for communion between persons. So far is this true, says Richardson, that more and more the sexual drive is being voided of all responsiveness to a signaling which is purely physical. The sexual drive is being transformed so that "it operates only within the range of voluntary love." This means that more and more Americans are experiencing sexual desire only for a person whom they love. If this tendency persists the drive to sexual intercourse will no longer be experienced as a compulsive physical need but as a way of expressing and expanding that new paramount value, psychological intimacy between free persons.

According to Richardson the "petting process;" that gradual and graduated initiation to sexual intercourse practiced by American adolescents, has fostered the personalistic ideal of marriage which was first implanted by the American Puritans. Akin to the practices of the courtly lovers of medieval times, the petting process is really a type of restraint (showing a respect for virginity) which has given rise to the modern phenomenon of males and females conversing with one another. It has encouraged the emergence of a whole new mode of consciousness called "self-consciousness" and generated heterosexual empathy. We are moving toward a sexuality bereft of concupiscence and compulsion like Augustine's vision of the sexuality of Adam and Eve before the Fall.

Richardson's essay—always intelligent and sensitive, at times brilliant and lyrically beautiful—is the most highly developed and provocative treatment of the current notion that sex is and should be only the expression of personal love and friendship. Nowhere will one find the wedding of Eros and Agape more beautifully celebrated. It is clear that Richardson has discovered intimacy and has desired to sing about it.

But the doctrine that sex can in every way become the language of love causes some uneasiness. (I state this uneasiness even at the risk of inviting another of Richardson's frequent sexual *ad hominems* "If you disagree with me you merely reveal your own sexual immaturity.") Any philosophy which dissolves the tension and ambiguity of human nature and especially of human sexuality seems ultimately unrealistic and idealistic. The tension in human nature has been expressed in many ways. It is the tension between body and spirit, nature and culture, instinct and reason, necessity and freedom, animality and rationality, the Dionysian and the Apollonian, the species and the person, and the like. It has been the fault of intellectuals, I believe, to gravitate exclusively to one or other of the extremes. The proverbs of common sense and ageless wisdom, on the other hand, retain the tension. Note how many proverbs there are which tend to contradict each other and are nevertheless conserved because they both express a partial truth about man, e.g., "Out of sight, out of mind" and "Absence makes the heart grow fonder."

Much of Richardson's discussion concerning sexuality seems often to describe an intellectual's experience and to gloss over some features of sexuality which are so pervasive and deep that they seem intractable to cultural change. It seems somewhat angelistic to say, for example, that "in persons who have attained a certain level of psychosexual integration genital feeling is aroused only in conjunction with particular beloved persons." What has often surprised me is the unannounced quality of sexual feeling. Note the strength of genital feeling aroused suddenly, while driving a car, by the entrance to view of the shapely animal posterior of a female human being, a genital feeling which prompts you to complete the zoological observation with the aid of the rear-view mirror. The mere physical presence of a girl in a train adds a special dimension of joy to a male passenger's ride. My point is that such merely "animal" arousal takes place and will continue to take place no matter how much conditioning from culture. It seems to be indicative of some other non-personal species-oriented "purposes" of sexuality. At least there has not been sufficient evidence advanced to show that the personalization of sexuality can completely eradicate its animality.

Richardson's angelistic strain is reflected in his ethical remarks. He maintains that a person who has fully integrated sexuality with the desire for personal love and intimacy needs no "exterior criteria" or socially reinforced rules because he now possesses "interior criteria" enabling him to "home in" with moral correctness on how far and with whom to relate sexually. As might be expected the discussion of fidelity is the vaguest and weakest portion of the book. This is unfortunate because a redefinition of the nature of fidelity in marriage and human relationships is the most imperious task of sexual ethics today. An adequate theory of fidelity must take full account not only of the risks but also of the safeguards for tenderness embodied in the monogamistic contract. Ethicians have always vacillated between an ethics modeled on art and an ethics modeled on law; the first stresses the autonomous and the second the automatic side of man's nature. Richardson has chosen to follow the first model almost exclusively and as a result again fails to maintain the tension apparent in human sexuality. Instead he is caught in a now surpassed situationism which exaggerates uniqueness and creativity and neglects the connective tissue which exists between man and man.

Sexuality arises at the age of puberty. It is experienced as a stranger in the house of the spirit, and to a great extent remains a stranger. It is hard to

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predict the crests and troughs of passion. We are not completely "ex-animal" existents as the Dewarts and Richardsons of the Toronto School often maintain. Evolution has not been completely cultural but bio-cultural. Without a doubt there is a great deal of plasticity in man and to a high degree he is able to remold his nature. Even the instinct toward sexual concourse and orgasm can be transmuted, transfigured and transformed. Witness the diversities in sexual meaning displayed by sadism, masochism, voyeurism, fetishism and the like. All of these elaborations are the result of the play of man's spiritual imagination which is unsatisfied with the poverty of mere biological pleasure. There are no canine voyeurs, but in man very often only the masquerade of fantasy makes the move to orgasm delightful or at times even possible. Psychologists are highly interested in the revelatory phantasies which accompany auto-erotic behavior. It appears that one might even experiment to discover what meaning he is giving to sexuality by having auto-erotic acts while he tests successively different kinds of fantasies for the degree of excitement evoked. The Rohrschach test once showed that a seminarian who constantly construed phallic inkblots as guns and cannons was experiencing sex as a means of expressing hostility. There seems to be an interplay between the different instincts so that one can become the bearer of the natural meaning of the other as well as the bearer of culturally imposed meanings.

Given this degree of plasticity in sexuality there is no reason why one cannot agree with Richardson that the erotic drive toward orgasm can be likewise firmly integrated into phantasies of tender communion. To a great extent, yes. But there is one thing about sex that it is rash to deny—that sex is and will remain to a great degree erotic. Much of the pleasure and fascination as well as danger of sexual desire lies in its animal ability to carry us away. Eros is not language; it is a torrent in the river of life. We remain to some extent animal and to a great extent it is the animal features of other persons which give us joy, their physical beauty, health, clear skin, ample breasts, graceful carriage, muscle tone, well-turned ankles and so on. It is very difficult for most people to experience sexual desire for a person who is very, very old though they may love that person dearly. Schopenhauer saw all this very clearly and exaggeratedly spoke of a "genius of the species" with larger non-personal aims as the real motive force behind genital intercourse and amorous intertwining. Sexuality can be loving but it is not love. Eros is not Logos. "Who would make of man an angel, makes of him a beast."

Three Trapped Tigers

GUILLERMO CABRERA INFANTE
translated by Donald Gardner and Suzanne Jill Levine

Harper & Row, $8.95

Betrayed by Rita Hayworth

MANUEL PUIG

translated by Suzanne Jill Levine

Dutton, $6.95

RONALD CHRIST

Myth is so much the foundation and fashion of art that perhaps our only valid approach to experience, once more, is to demythologize. Yet such access, whether in theology or movies, is more often than not *re*-mythologizing; and obvious Euripedean attacks like Passolini's *Medea* really have more in common with *Jesus Christ Superstar* than with Bultmann's *Jesus Christ and Mythology*.

Pretty serious sounding for a couple of books called *Three Trapped Tigers* and *Betrayed by Rita Hayworth*; still, it's what's needed because each is flashy, hilarious, campy, and—*not* "but"—formidable, innovating, determining—in a word, brilliant—as it pursues contents and techniques of remythologizing by way of fulfilling the only obligation of any work in the genre: to novelize the novel.

The model of course is Joyce, who bequeaths interior monologue to these books that accomplish narratives without authorial narration. In both, the author functions as "God's stenographer," not as creator (to quote Cabrera Infante), imperceptibly recording silent thoughts, conversations, letters, diaries and permitting them all, with final generosity of the playwright, to stand autonomously. So the model is Henry James too, with his dream of the fully dramatic novel, one he never realized because he would not, as Stephen Dedalus said the artist should—as Puig and Cabrera Infante really do—"remain within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails."

But the real hero in these novels is the written word: medium and product of the radical remythologizing both writers manifest. For example, Cabrera Infante's razzmataz book—always leave 'em laughing, if you didn't like that one, how about this?—starts off with a virtuoso, bilingual spiel of a Havana nightclub M.C. inviting you to "the wonderful world of supernatural beauty of the Tropics." From the start, then, the spotlight is on verbal *performance*: in fact there's nothing else in this book which bursts referential limits, scampering, stumbling, soaring into fireworks where language illuminates its own foolishness—"Aurelita and I went to the movies on Thursdays, because it was ladies day though it was actually night, but we didn't go to the movies after all"—plops on its stock phrases—"like Vincent, I have an ear for painting"—pulls the suspenders of its baggy pants —"*Under the Lorry* by Malcolm Volcano" and "Beddy Davis in *Now Voyeur*"—and freights more than the traffic will allow as ex-patriate Cabrera Infante proves his Cuba and his ventriloquism "an island of double and triple entendres told by a drunk idiot signifying everything." There is a story here—of a city playing itself out—several stories as a matter of fact, including one about the career of a fat Negro singer described as "Moby Dick's kid sister, the Black Whale"; but they are spun through each other, fragmented

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and refracted, so the effect is not of narrative or narratives, but, as the author revealed to Emir Rodríguez Monegal, of a "gallery of voices." More a fun house, it seems to me, with the final installment the ramblings of a mad woman who returns us to the world of "pure" language first introduced by that tongue twister title of greater euphonic than semantic value.

Language itself is remythologized, then; and the real model, no kidding, for all these pranks is Sterne, which means that *TTT* knows all about its Shandean arbitrariness, typographical excesses, galloping digressions and splintered, unresolving form. Knows and loves; but unlike Joyce, who also learned a thing or two from Sterne, Cabrera Infante is direct and beguiling in wanting you to enjoy his high jinks. Significantly, both he and Sterne use blank pages as invitations to your participating in making up literature as they unmake plot, character, meaning.

Cuba is remythologized too, though. Cabrera Infante's epigraph from Lewis Carroll—". . . and she tried to fancy what the flame of a candle looks like after the candle is blown out"—points to his working up a Cuba before the "Castro convertible," a *demi-monde* of seedy *boites*, tepid *Cuba libres* and boozy actors realizing themselves by reinstituting Hollywood myths on a meandering debauch in Havana's nighttown. *TTT* is thus the *Satyrcon* of Batista's Cuba and like the Petronius we know, like Fellini too, Cabrera Infante doesn't so much pass judgment as fantasize the disconnected process of life where mythomorphosis has reached such pitch that a character says: "I think my voice sounded a little like Arturo de Córdova but also a little like my own," where a seducer pumps his own lust with "I forget the Hays code, I start working on her body in medium-shot." The "semantic safaris" are what startle here and please, but the fantastic shadow world in this *Satyricon* of characters born with silver screens in their mouths looms for anyone recognizing the new fall of an old empire. Any 18th-century landscape architect would acknowledge *TTT* (and the patchwork wall at the end of Fellini's film, too) a ruin to terminate a view.

Like Cabrera Infante's characters, Puig's suffer from contagious cinema: *prognosis negative*. First they're infected with images—Rita Hayworth betraying Tyrone Power in *Blood and Sand* is typical—by which they mythologize their drab existence and then they are corrupted by their own remythologizing of that image. Rita doesn't marry the movie star Carlos Palau with whom she danced but Berto who "looks exactly like him"; and her son Toto, Puig's pivotal character, envisions *The Great Zeigfeld*, recreating the movie so that Luise Rainer doesn't die until the end —she doesn't die at all in the original because "at the end it's nice when they die but when they die in the middle you don't see them anymore," projecting himself into the movie as a little bellboy who "steals ravioli, a partridge and pieces of jelly roll, no, better, a meringue cream cake" to keep the ailing Miss Rainer alive. As in *TTT* we don't see movies in Puig's book; rather their re-imagining and then still another remove as adults draw reminiscences of favorite scenes and children color in cut-out newspaper ads, building dreams and selves around pictures of pictures while reality—flat as the Argentine pampa they exist on, dark as the theaters they dream in—swathes them in the isolation and blank decay of their monologues, leaves them to say "I hear myself talking and it sounds like a movie to me. . . ." Nowhere does Puig better show the mythifying of myth than when Toto says: "In Héctor's communion book there was a saint just like Norma Shearer. . . ." Only Toto, only Hollywood, could blind themselves to the blatant fact of a cross-eyed star-saint.

The model for this domestic non-drama is *Don Quixote* by way of Flaubert's anti-romanticism, and the model for Puig's treatment is the French New Novel as influenced by Ivy Compton-Burnett's centerless conversations. So, for all the quixotic frivolity, all the suffusing humor, all the sullen brutality Puig evokes in his pop opera (Rinso style) of small time desperation refilming life for the Saturday matinee of its reverie, Puig's narration is pokey. (As it should be when Madame Bovary meets Helen Trent.) His first sentence —"A brown cross-stitch over beige linen, that's why your tablecloth turned out so well"—establishes not only the generating verbal metaphor in the book but also the dull tonality of its world and the chief occupation of its inhabitants: embroidering—with thread, with dreams, with passions.

As much as *TTT*, *Betrayed by Rita Hayworth* thrusts toward satire, but their individual virtue is devotion to rhetoric: whereas Cabrera Infante is all sparks and sparkle, Puig is muffle, swoop, drone and snigger as he performs voices of spinsters, gossips, tough kids, worried fathers, and, yes, student essays in installments more like 15-minute segments of radio dramas than anything else. But satire, as etymology reminds us, is form—medley, mixture, originally of food—as much as attitude; and in this respect Cabrera Infante is right to suggest his book is "salad for all seasons." Puig's fiction, however, is hardly less varied, bringing, as it does, diverse experiments with recorded language, especially spoken language, to perfection. I'm thinking of "Choli's Conversation with Mita" where only one woman's remarks are reported: another invitation to take part in fiction-making, a new variation on the dramatic monologue; and the opening chapter given entirely in the speaker's words with no explicit indication of who they are or what they are doing; the novel as film script, the literary mythification of the less than common place. In these *arrangements of speech* Puig masterfully releases the reader into "pure" language: pattern and sound are all the content.

Finally, it is that etymological sense of satire which masters here, for bourgeois day dreams are no more uniquely the subject of novels than moribund societies; while renovation of the form, namely, for us, remythologizing away from old gods of plot and character *is* novel, as these fictive miscellanies lavishly exhibit. In both meta-novels (as Cabrera Infante labels *TTT*), marking

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the appearance in English of fabulous non-narrators as well as the debut of a gifted and opportune translator, Suzanne Jill Levine, you witness produced legends that belong at once and inevitably to both the history and brightest contemporary ranks of fiction.

The French made the New Novel, but the Latin Americans are writing the Newest.

Something Beautiful for God

MALCOLM MUGGERIDGE

Harper & Row, $5.95.

MAISIE WARD

"Just a picture book," said a friend of whom I enquired about Malcolm Muggeridge's intriguing title *Something Beautiful for God*. A picture book it certainly is—many first-class illustrations coming from the film shot in Calcutta by the BBC—but by no means *only*. One of these pictures taken inside the chapel puzzled the producer. "Technically speaking," he said "the result was impossible." For the light was so bad that they had despaired of success, yet the picture came out exquisitely irradiated. Muggeridge stoutly proclaims it a miracle and notes with a wry smile that Fr. Agnellus Andrew and the other Catholic pundits of the BBC were "troubled" at the idea of an unearthly light that shone around the heads of dying derelicts and sought for a natural explanation, however improbable. It is perhaps strange that he can accept this and not the infinite miracle of the Incarnation—but, as he tells us, Mother Teresa refuses to despair of him.

It has obviously become a real friendship, a friendship valuable to both—and to us his readers. For he has given us, often in an exquisite English rare for such records, an account which his Yugoslavian saint would not and indeed could not have given herself, of a work on a vast scale which yet confirms everything Dorothy Day has ever said about "personalism" and refutes the sneer against private effort which has called it a "bandaid on a cancerous world."

All of us who know India know that, even before the Pakistani strain on its resources, starvation had become, all over the country, the commonest cause of death. Field laborers are lucky if they and their families get one meal a day and a priest friend of mine, deeply engaged in social work, has visited a family in a bad season to find them eating dirt.

In the large cities the misery is accentuated: men fall dead in the street, the traffic dodges past them, the police ignore them. The first woman Mother Teresa brought into her refuge had face and body partly eaten away by rats. It was the dying she began by gathering in —that they might die with comfort and dignity and above all encompassed by love. The group have to date picked up over twenty-three thousand in the Calcutta streets, of whom about half recover, largely perhaps for the same reason she gives for the peaceful deaths —their first need is to know that someone cares: the smile of love is even more important than attention to the hideously obvious bodily needs.

For most of the recruits (including high caste Indians to whom the touch of these outcasts would once have meant pollution) work in the streets begins in the novitiate. And out of the many hundreds of girls who flock to her she can count on her fingers the number who leave. As to money—she began with her faith and five dollars. The funds needed for the work have always come. She and her fellow workers continue to live as poorest of the poor.

Few government departments can do anything like the work these women do —they and the Brothers now associated with them. Besides the apostolate of the street they have a school of five hundred children, they have taken on the care of lepers, for whom they are building a rehabilitation center.

Mother Teresa is very much down to earth in her thinking even while her heart is shared between God and the poor. Every sick man or woman picked up is taken first to the municipal hospital and only brought to hers if they are refused. In her own gentle way she tries with officials as with us all to arouse a sense of responsibility, to widen the range of their thinking. This part of her work must be interesting as well as important, for there is in India at present a remarkable fluidity which can and ought to be turned to advantage. An outcast of great ability is a member of the Cabinet, yet it is still not uncommon in the countryside for an outcast to be beaten up for drinking at a caste well. In one such case a friend of mine was prepared to win legal compensation for

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the victim—who at the last moment became far too terrified to appear in court. Ideas and habits established for many centuries cannot be banished in a generation. But Mother Teresa will remind us that love conquers all.

She told Malcolm Muggeridge that her great sacrifice had been leaving the Order with whom she began her religious life—the Loreto nuns, Irish offspring of Mary Ward's English order. The best part of my own education was imparted by those nuns—and I would not call their life luxurious. But it was ordered, peaceful, cultured—and above all undisturbed by the sudden changes and violent irruptions ceaseless in this Calcutta world of disease, accident and death. As one gets older sudden change, incessant change, is trying; but Sister Teresa has become inured to it, for beneath all change there is for her a root of stability—with St. Paul she can do all things for Him who does them with her and for her. She does not want the glory her admirers would heap upon her—all she wants is to do something beautiful for God.

Getting Even

WOODY ALLEN

Random House, $5.95

J. ARTHUR PRATTLEBACK

The last time I saw Woody Allen he asked me to write a Preface for his new book. It was at a party some Panthers were throwing to raise bail money for Meyer Kahane. All the chic people were there—Pat Boone, Julia Child, Norman Podhoretz, Colonel Saunders. Woody spent the evening crouched behind the Oscar Mayer hot dog man taking notes on pieces of rye bread. Having promised to write the thing, I discovered later that his book had been published two weeks previously.

Woody—when I complained by phone—was a good sport. It was a shame, he agreed, for a good Preface to go to waste. Why not use it as a book review? That's what he said the man at the *Times* was going to do with *his* Preface. Also the man at *Newsweek* and the man at *Time* and the man at the *Saturday Review*.

Woody Allen, as you know, is the son of Steve Allen and the grandson of Fred Allen. He was born, in 1935, in a crackerjack box in the Brooklyn slum where his family lived until Woody became rich and moved them to a gold-plated Plymouth on the Belt Parkway. Young Woody was a child prodigy. Having taken up tap dancing, at the age of four he performed on the piano at Carnegie Hall, where his uncle was a janitor. This triumph led to several years of study at the Kings County School for Delinquent Boys, where the budding genius was kept on a diet of Sun-Maid raisins and chiclets, an experience which deeply marked his childhood.

In his senior year of high school, Allen invented a device which returned him to the mental state of a six-year-old. For this he won a Westinghouse Science Scholarship to grade school. Nonetheless Woody was cured of the science bug. He turned to comedy and scripted several plays and movies as well as ghost-writing books like *Making It, Six Crises,* and *Humanae Vitae.*

Since then, he has become a success by playing the role of the ninety-pound weakling who gets sand kicked in his face and his girl taken away. The truth of the matter, however, is that in real life Allen is a big guy with a black belt in judo (he slouches and wears descender shoes) and is a whizz with women. Those of us who are close to him don't let this information out, because we know it would ruin his career.

Allen, who once went forty days without tieing his shoelaces, specializes in the *non-sequitur*, which only follows. If you like Groucho Marx, you will love Woody Allen, although if you *are* Groucho Marx, you may be annoyed. Luckily for Allen, not many of you are Groucho Marx.

Quite frankly, I must report that it is a chastized, more serious Woody Allen who emerges from this latest collection. One still finds the old light touch in his historical accounts of the invention of the sandwich, the discovery of the fake ink blot, and his expatriate years in Paris with Gertrude and Pablo and the time Ernest came and everyone drank a lot and stayed up all night and Woody asked Ernest to dance and Zelda laughed and then Ernest put on some boxing gloves and broke Woody's nose.

But a darker, metaphysical strain can be seen in Allen's outline for "My Philosophy"; in the playlet where Death plays gin rummy with Nat Ackerman; in the Dostoievskian "Notes from the Overfed"; and in the theological detective story, "Mr. Big." It can also be seen in the book itself, which is bound and printed throughout in black.

For $5.95, *Getting Even* is not a very big book, but then Woody Allen pretends not to be a very big fellow, so don't be rude. What the book needs, of course, is a good Preface, and if you send 25 cents to me, c/o this magazine, you can cut this out and paste it in the front.

The point, finally, is not that Allen is funny, which he is not, but that he is funny, which he is; and that in this day and age of nuclear weapons and Martha Mitchell, who's to say?

The Professor's Daughter

PIERS PAUL READ

Lippincott, $6.95

CARL SENNA

The characteristic tone of American liberalism is passionately optimistic, a nationalistic confidence in the future. Foreigners have traditionally never understood this simple mood. It has seemed uncivilized that Americans are as proud of their historical capacity as other people of their past. But our obsession with technique has not meant that we do not value having a distinctive culture. Our moral ambiguities and affection for stylistic change in fact embarrass our self-criticism. Really we want that intangible attraction of older nations, spiritual contentment, and not just a long history. *The Professor's Daughter* is a good fictional portrait of our American malaise. Here a father and his daughter find that

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their search for a meaningful cause is an oppressive condition. Their dilemma is that material wealth has deprived them of any social need. And this cunning, cynical tale suggests that our motivation for changing the status quo is frustrated by the freedom from want.

Henry Rutledge is a famous professor of politics at Harvard and a descendant of New England pioneers. He enters the 1960's at the height of his career; we are told that the White House has occasionally sought his advice on domestic affairs. Largely because of Henry's wealth and political expertise, his closest friend, Senator McLaughlin, is within reach of the Democratic nomination for President. But the Rutledges are not a happy family. Henry's wife, Lillian, hovers on the brink of alcoholism and Henry lives in the humiliating knowledge of her adulterous affair with his friend, Senator McLaughlin. His eldest daughter, Louisa, reacts to the veniality of Harvard society. She is outraged by the immorality in her family and around Cambridge. But because of her own amoral development, she lives as immorally as her parents, and lacks only their public discretion. Henry has two daughters, both of whom are alienated and paternally indulged. But his tolerance of the neurotic escapades of Louisa is partially motivated by guilt. He has never been able to forget the night that he savored incestuous impulses towards her. And for those few moments Henry forgives her everything.

Through flashbacks we learn that Louisa has quickly absorbed the excitement of the civil-rights movement and dropped out of Berkeley after one semester. She marries a politically radical hippie who introduces her to the San Francisco underground and LSD. Then she is abandoned while pregnant. Following an illegal abortion and a Reno divorce, Louisa returns to Cambridge, anti-social and aimless still. There she begins an affair with one of Henry's students, a Yankeefied Mexican-American. The professor soon discovers that this otherwise stabilizing relationship on his daughter has a bizarre dimension. Louisa and his students are conspiring to kill Senator McLaughlin. The Senator is a hawkish leader in the Vietnam war debate, despite his liberal voting record on domestic affairs. The conspirators hope to make his assassination an example to other hawks. The narrative smoothly alternates between events in the lives of father and daughter, interweaving and unifying them with a superb dramatic rhythm. On the basis of his two previous novels, *Monk Dawson* and *The Junkers*, Read has been compared to his compatriot, Graham Greene. At least from a technical view the comparison seems justified. Read has a fine sense of timing. The scenes in *The Professor's Daughter* are never boring; and at moments the action is almost sensational. But the Greene influence is definitely there; the professor and his daughter reflect an unmistakable concern for the moral fate of our affluent culture.

From time to time we are treated to abstract discussions of revolutionary theory in Henry's seminar. But these are brief interludes; they do not slow the story's momentum. The seminar is an obvious satire on the American sensitivity to minority accusations of social discrimination. The participants all seem to represent popular causes: two women, a poor white, a black, a Jew, a Jesuit Communist and a Mexican-American. The evil Father Gray and the hysterical Jewish leftist are more successful than the others, who are only stereotypes. Perhaps the priest is Read's special achievement because such a person is still a social anomaly. All the same, Father Gray is terribly real, not so much as a character but as an attitude. That he is a Communist and a Catholic priest seems incidental; he is always a fanatical authoritarian. In one of Henry's seminars the priest lectures to the professor that "ethical absolutes" and conscience are sovereign over human sympathy. But "a man with no capacity for sympathy," rejoins the professor, "would make a poor kind of saint." That remark has tragic implications.

The characters in *The Professor's Daughter* have asked themselves: What is to be done? But there is always too much to do even in prosperous America; so wealthy idealists like Henry Rutledge and his daughter find themselves overwhelmed in a succession of unresolved causes. Read's message seems to be that life is not meaningful unless it is rational; and necessity, not possibility, makes it so.

No Victory Parades: The Return of the Vietnam Veteran

MURRAY POLNER

Holt, Rinehart, $5.95

JIM CASTELLI

If you haven't been to Vietnam, or don't know someone who has, *No Victory Parades* is a crash course in the terror, confusion, drugs, depression, atrocities, and tragedy of the war. It consists mainly of interviews with nine of the 204 veterans Polner talked to in preparing the book; this format makes

PRISONERS OF NORTH VIETNAM

Sheila Cronin has a brother, Navy Lieutenant Michael Paul Cronin, who has been a prisoner of the North Vietnamese for four and a half years. For the past two years families of prisoners of war and other missing servicemen have been urging the American public to write to Hanoi for lists of their prisoners and the opportunity to communicate with their families. This has had some effect.

Miss Cronin is now asking people to "write again. Only don't write to Hanoi. Write to your Congressman, your Senators and especially to the President urging them to set a withdrawal date so we can end the war and bring the prisoners home and all the men home."

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it a powerful emotional statement, but also hampers it because it doesn't allow a fuller development of the important themes brought out in the last two chapters of overview. In these chapters, Polner confronts the questions which have been largely ignored in most treatments of the war—what happens to the men who fight in it, and just who *are* these young men?

The most frequent effect of the war is "psychic numbing"—the loss of the ability to feel. Polner describes the way in which American soldiers in Vietnam have learned to accept violence as a practical means of solving problems, and to commit the worst possible acts using as justification the need to preserve America's "honor." He quotes Dr. John Rosenberger, a Fort Dix psychiatrist, who explains that the "apple-pie Americans, usually bored with politics, patriotic and waiting out their separation so as they can move into the middle-class dream they all share" can commit brutal, cold-blooded murder without feeling any emotion at all: "The real tragedy of the war for them, and possibly for all of us, is that they don't feel the *tragedy* of the war."

This lack of feeling may not be totally attributable to the war, however. Noting that the problems of Black veterans are so unique that they should be treated separately, Polner tells us that he is writing about the children of lower- and working-class homes who bore the brunt of the burden from 1964 through 1969. He finds that these men "appeared to me to confirm Edgar Z. Friedenberg's remark that 'All weakness corrupts, and impotence corrupts absolutely.' "

Polner notes that "If before service they had ever thought of the 'cause' at all, it was a passive acceptance of civics classes, of the mythology of obedience and loyalty and anticommunism, of deference to men of power and to special interests too complicated to unravel."

"For the whites," explains Polner, "military service was largely an escape from banality. Inside the protective and often isolated military setting, in the absence of the cultural and social inter-

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course of civilian life, they performed a needed function, achieved a sense of accomplishment and prowess, a kind of illusory maturity. Women, drugs and liquor were all easily available to them. They had power, the uniform, and the most destructive arsenal in history."

These men had been trained as pawns since childhood by society and by families who had been given America's image instead of the "good life" to cling to. They are the men least capable of understanding what the war is doing to them and to us. The trauma of the war is enough, but most of these men suffered psychic numbing before they were inducted—which makes the fact that so many of them have had conversions more significant than it first appears. (Although Polner sadly tells us that the wartime behavior of "doves" wasn't markedly different from that of the "hawks" or the "haunted," his three categories.)

There was another important similarity in the experiences of the men Polner interviewed. Whatever their feelings about the war or the Vietnamese people, they all loved the Vietnamese children; many of them worked with children when they got back to the States. Amidst everything else, they somehow perceived the hope that children symbolize. I saw two boys about seven years old marching the other day, and assumed they were playing "war." But then I heard their chanting and realized they were playing "peace march." Whatever else their generation may do, it isn't likely to turn to the military for the status society didn't give, or try to find its "manhood" fighting a macabre war.

REVIEWERS

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CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 147)

theology and which finally has no "thus says the Lord" to speak *from* God *to* man and *for* man's freedom and fulfillment. One is reminded of Barth's memorable commentary (with which Bonhoeffer also would have agreed) on the end result of that late 19th and early 20th century liberalism which, just because it finally so compromised the particularity of God's decisive good-news in the event of Jesus Christ that it had no kerygmatic proclamation left, was bankrupt too in its efforts to establish a sound basis for responsible ethics.

> For this theology, to think about God meant to think in scarcely veiled fashion about man, more exactly about the religious . . . man. To speak about God meant to speak in an exalted tone but once again and more than ever about man, his revelations, his wonders, his faith and his works.

Fr. Kilian has reminded us again at what is at stake not only for the ecumenical movement but for the entire Gospel enterprise. His emphasis upon the particularity of Jesus Christ, far from being an obscurantistic throwback to the darker days of Christian exclusivism, is quite the opposite, an emphasis upon a proclamation which in its reckless optimism dares to look ahead to a future in which all things will be gathered together in one in Jesus Christ. And that not for man's abolishment but for his freedom.

And so, thanks to *Commonweal.* It is good too, just when some of us have almost given up hope on Roman Catholic theologians, to read such authentic theology from the pen of a distinguished Catholic ecumenist. LEIGH D.JORDAHL
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